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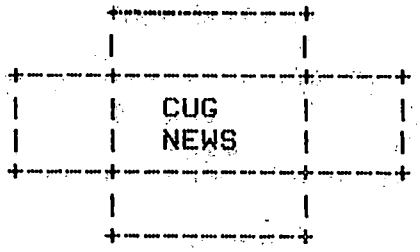
Computer Users' Group

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY



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RETROSPECT

In 1983, the Computer Users' Group was actively involved in many areas. Some of them are:

1) Last semester and during this semester, members-at-large and the president sit on the Advisory Comittee for Computer Resources and Allocation, and the Computer Science Department commitee. Information concerning these committees may be obtained from Anne Pounds, Larry Mitchell and Brian Patrick.

2) Volunteer Programmer-On-Duty services each weeknight from 6 to 9 at the Sir George Williams campus have been maintained.

3) The Computer Users' Group Handbook was entirely rewritten to reflect the latest changes and additions to the computing facilities at Concordia University.

4) On December 22, the Computer Users' Group co-sponspored the highly successful Jingle Balls Beer Bash at the Campus Centre at Loyola.

5) A tour of the Bell Computer Centre at Dorval was planned and staged last October.

6) Guest speaker Neil Gardner was invited and lectured on the Cyber Control Language (CCL).

7) A tutorial service has been implemented and will be in full swing this semester to provide extra private tutoring that may be required.

8) A Suggestion Box has been installed outside the Computer Centre on the ninth floor of the Hall Building. Your ideas and input are required in order that the opinions of the CUG executive best underscore the views of the computing community.

9) The Computer Users' Group library has been expanded and updated to include later versions of Control Data manuals as well as new references for the VAX 11/750. For the latest in computer technology, CUG has also subscribed to BYTE magazine. All these references are available at the CUG office at H-983.

10) Maps of the ninth floor facilities at Sir Georges Williams were drafted by the Computer Users' Group.

Like any organization, our success depends on the co-operative efforts of the Executive members and the individuals they represent. The two factions are mutually indispensable. Therefore, in the new year, the Computer Users' Group welcomes suggestions and helping

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hands from all corners of the University.

THE NEW YEAR

In the new year, the Computer Users' Group will stage the Annual Small Business Computer Show at the Loyola Campus Center on March 19 and 20. Anyone interested in planning and organizing is welcome to assist.

Contact Brian Patrick.

EXECUTIVE SWITCH

Because of a heavy workload, Larry Mitchell has resigned as Vice-President of the Computer Users' Group, but will continue to serve as Member-at-Large. The duties of Vice-President have been assumed by Ted Briggs, first elected as a Member-at-Large.

Larry Mitchell will retain his position as Sir George Williams' Undergraduate representative on the Departmental Committee of Computer Science.

We wish Ted and Larry all the best in their new capacities.

COMMITTEE NOTES

In a recent survey published by the Advisory Committee on Computer Resources and Utilization (ACCRU), item 15 read as follows :

"(Should the Computer Centre) Choose a specific brand of low cost micros to be bought in bulk and resold to the University community (?); this particular brand would receive substantial support via printers, graphics stations, communication links, software library and hardware maintenance throughout the University; the idea is that everyone would have access at least to this minimal and specific computing device."

Outside maintenance and general support, a serious dilemna arises over microcomputer standardization. The Computer Users' Group vehemently opposes singularization on the bases of :

1) obsolescence
2) learning constraints
3) uniformity.

Uniformity across a University wide cirriculum ignores the real question of suitability. The type of microcomputer is highly dependent on the application. And since the applications are essentially unlimited in an University environment, problems will certainly arise over standardization. Concentrating on one model of microcomputer stymies the flexibility required to adapt to the newer and better innovations in the rapidly changing field of micro technology.

Also, it may be difficult to keep selling costs low. Students with amply funds may prefer to purchase other computer models and effectively disrupt, in any case, the cause of standardization. We tend to agree with the general observation that suitable low cost micros with sufficient memory and computing strength do not exist.

IN SEARCH OF A BUG

The Computer Users' Group recently observed some interesting bugs with the FORTRAN compiler concerning a memory conflect when declaring several arrays in the main

program or the subroutines.

At first, it looked like if the problem was happening when passing parameters to the subroutines but in fact it was happening when declaring the arrays in it. Actually, the memory cells of the arrays seemed sometimes to be shifted of one or more memory locations in the main memory, messing everything up.

We encourage you to let us know about anything that could help us to find the bug.

Until we kill that bug, if you have any problem that seems to be related with the above, we suggest you to add one dummy variable in-between your array declarations and perform a dummy assignment statement on it. In several cases that was enough to numb the bug for a while...

Contact Marc Trudelle.